

RetireeNews

Board Corner
New Board Members

Cover Story
**Meet John Richardson, a
Marvelous MOSERS Retiree**

Noteworthy News
2023 COLA

Retirement & You
**Protect Yourself
from Fraud**

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Crystal Wessing - Chairwoman
Jenny Jacobs - Vice Chair
Senator Rusty Black
Representative Dirk Deaton
Gary Findlay
Joe Keifer
Treasurer Vivek Malek
Representative Don Mayhew
Gary Metzger
Senator John Rizzo
Commissioner Ken Zellers

Executive Director

Abby Spieler

Office Hours

Monday–Friday
8:00 am–12:00 pm
1:00 pm–4:30 pm

Contact

Toll Free: (800) 827-1063
In Jefferson City: (573) 632-6100
Fax: (573) 632-6103

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Visit

907 Wildwood Dr
Jefferson City, MO

Mailing Address

PO Box 209
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0209

Email

mosers@mosers.org

Relay MO

711 (Voice)
(800) 735-2966 (TTY)

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Chief Communications Officer - Candy Smith
Writer/Editor - Nicole Attebery
Graphic Designer - Mike Azar

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youtube.com/MOSERSONline

Make sure you receive your important benefit information now and in the future. Verify or update your mailing address, email, and phone number while logged in. Go to mosers.org and log in to [myMOSERS](https://myMOSERS.org).

Welcome, New Board Members!

On March 30, 2023, Speaker of the House Dean Plocher, appointed two new Board members to the MOSERS Board of Trustees.

Representative Dirk Deaton

Representative Dirk Deaton, a Republican, represents McDonald and Newton counties (District 159) in the Missouri House of Representatives. He was elected to his first two-year term in November 2018 and re-elected in 2020 and 2022. Representative Deaton currently serves as the Vice-Chairman of the House Budget Committee.

Prior to his legislative service, Rep. Deaton worked for a small Southwest Missouri manufacturer. He was the co-founder of the Noel Betterment Association and is a member of many community organizations. Rep. Deaton also serves on the Executive Committee for the Council of State Governments – Southern Region.

Representative Don Mayhew

Representative Mayhew, a Republican, represents parts of Miller and Pulaski counties (District 124) in the Missouri House of Representatives. He was elected to his first two-year term in November 2018.

Rep. Mayhew graduated in 1991 with a Bachelor of Science in civil engineering from the University of Missouri–Rolla (now Missouri S&T). In addition to his legislative duties, Rep. Mayhew is a licensed surveyor and engineer and is the owner of a small engineering and surveying company. He previously served as the Pulaski County surveyor for 10 years. Rep. Mayhew served six years on the Crocker School Board, including a term as president of the board.

The MOSERS Board of Trustees welcomed State Treasurer, Vivek Malek in January 2023.

Treasurer Vivek Malek

Vivek Malek was sworn in as Missouri's 48th State Treasurer on January 17, 2023.

Born in Rohtak, India, he earned bachelor's and law degrees in India before coming to Southeast Missouri State University at Cape Girardeau for his master's in business administration.

Treasurer Malek earned his MBA from SEMO and went on to receive a master of laws degree from the University of Illinois College of Law. He decided to make Missouri his home and began practicing law.

Executive Director's Update

Board Updates from Abby Spieler

The main objective of Board meetings is to ensure the long-term sustainability of promised benefits. Below are the highlights from the February 17, 2023, meeting.

The first order of business was the election of officers. Crystal Wessing was re-elected as Board Chairwoman and Jenny Jacobs was elected as Vice Chair. Congratulations to Crystal and Jenny. Thank you for your willingness to serve in these very important roles! Also, thank you to Gary Metzger for serving as Vice Chair from June 2018 until February 2023.

At the meeting, we also welcomed Senator Rusty Black who previously served as a MOSERS Board Trustee while he was a member of the Missouri House of Representatives. We also welcomed our new State Treasurer, Vivek Malek, who, as State Treasurer, is an ex-officio member of the MOSERS Board.

At the meeting, the Board heard reports from the Audit Committee, the Investment Committee, and the Strategic Planning and Governance Committee.

Next, staff presented a quarterly update on MOSERS' investment program. While MOSERS is a diversified investor focusing on long-term investment performance, the Board does receive quarterly updates from staff and the board investment consultant. For the quarter ending December 31st, the MOSERS investment return was 4%. On a FYTD basis, the portfolio returned negative 3%.



Safeguard Your Summer Vacay!

Checked everything off your list? Sunscreen, bug spray, swimsuits... what about Travel Assistance?

Preparing for possible twists and turns is important when planning a great vacation!

The Standard Insurance Company has done just that for our members with their Travel Assistance program. The Travel Assistance program is available to members who have basic life insurance through MOSERS.

If you are a MOSERS retiree and you retained basic life insurance in retirement, you and your spouse are covered with Travel Assistance. Travel Assistance is available when you travel more than 100 miles from home or internationally for up to 180 days.

What it is:

Travel Assistance is available through group insurance products provided by Standard Insurance Company (The Standard). The service is provided by Assist America, Inc.

Travel Assistance can help MOSERS members and their families prepare for trips and during critical situations while away from home. The program can assist participants with finding qualified medical providers, legal services or with the replacement of lost credit cards and passports.

Have you seen their easy-to-use mobile app?

The Assist America Mobile app lets members access a wide range of global emergency assistance services. This is replacing the previous wallet card.

Assist America Mobile App Features:

Tap for Help. Use one-touch calling to reach Assist America's 24/7 Operations Center.

Voice over Internet Protocols (VoIP). Avoid international phone charges by calling Assist America for free using a Wi-Fi connection

Pre-Trip Information. Access detailed country-specific information to prepare for your trip.

Travel Alerts. Receive alerts for urgent global situations that may impact travel.

Travel Status Indicator. Use the GPS feature to know when you're eligible for services.

Embassy & U.S. Pharmacy Locator. Locate the nearest embassy/consulate of 23 countries and pharmacies near you (U.S. pharmacies only).

Mobile ID Card. Find your Assist America ID card conveniently stored within the app.

Available in Seven Languages.

The app is available in English, Spanish, Arabic, Mandarin, Thai, Bahasa, and French.

What it is not:

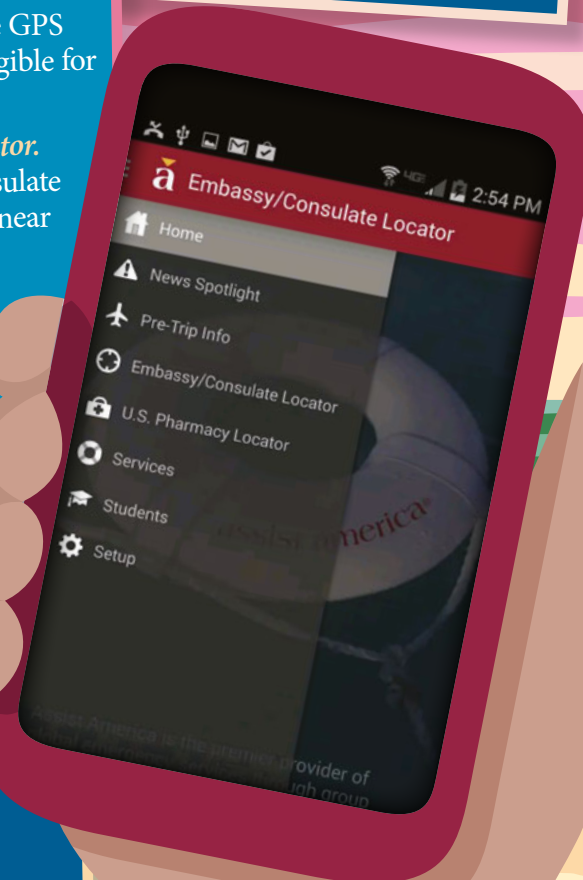
Travel Assistance is not travel insurance. Travel Assistance provides specific support services while traveling. Travel insurance provides monetary compensation for losses that occur while traveling.

Follow the steps below to download the app:

- 1 Visit Google Play or the App Store
- 2 Find the Assist America Mobile App
- 3 Enter reference number **01-AA-STD-5201** and member name

To learn more, see the *Travel Assistance Flyer* and *Service Overview* located in our Online Library.

Get security that travels with you!



The 2023 COLA

The cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for 2023 is 5%.

This COLA applies to all retired general state employees who are members of MSEP, MSEP 2000, or MSEP 2011, as well as members of the Judicial Plan and the Judicial Plan 2011.

See information to the right for legislators and statewide elected officials.

The purpose of a COLA for any type of pay or retirement benefit is to help you cope with inflation. COLAs help you maintain your purchasing power as inflation increases the cost of various items you buy.

According to Missouri state law, each January, MOSERS must compare the average Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the calendar year just completed (2022) to the average CPI from the prior year (2021) to determine the percentage change between the two years. For general state employees, COLAs are based on 80% of the percentage increase in the average (CPI) from one year to the next. The maximum increase is 5% (minimum 0%).

In determining the CPI, the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics calculates changes in the costs of a number of items each month. To learn more about the CPI, see the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistic's answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on their website.

How MOSERS calculates the COLA for retirees is outlined in state law. The Social Security Administration uses a different process to calculate COLAs for Social Security benefits:

- SSA uses the CPI-W index; MOSERS uses the CPI-U index, the Consumer Price Index for Urban Consumers.
- SSA bases their COLA off the 3rd calendar quarter change; MOSERS COLAs are based on the percentage increase in the average Consumer Price Index (CPI) from one year to the next using data from the entire year.
- The SSA COLA is 100% of the change; the MOSERS COLA is 80% of the percentage increase from one year to the next.

You will receive your COLA in the same month each year. In general, it will be on the anniversary date of your retirement, with the following exceptions:

- If you converted from MSEP to MSEP 2000 during the conversion window in 2000, we will apply your COLA each July.
- If you elected a BackDROP, we will apply your COLA each year on the anniversary of your BackDROP date.

We have more information about the COLAs in the **Retiree** section of our website, view the following topics at mosers.org/retirees/cost-of-living-adjustments:

[History of Annual COLA Rates](#)

[2023 COLA Calculation Memo](#)

[COLA Video](#)

COLA exceptions for legislators and MSEP members who have not yet reached their COLA cap:

If you are a retired legislator who took office after July 1, 2000, your benefit will be adjusted according to the percentage increase in pay for an active member of the general assembly. No other COLAs will be provided.

If you retired under MSEP, and were employed before August 28, 1997, you will receive a minimum 4% COLA until accumulated COLAs reach 65% of your initial base benefit. This is called your COLA cap. Upon reaching the cap, your COLA will be calculated like other retirees and will range from 0% to 5% each year depending on the increase in the Consumer Price Index.



*Curious about the Secure Act 2.0 changes?
Go to mosers.org to find out more.*



In our last publication of RetireeNews, we asked you to share your retirement stories. We received many submissions and hope to feature them all over time. This edition features the story of John Richardson.

We had the pleasure of meeting up with John D. Richardson this May, at Long Branch State Park in Macon, Missouri. We were delighted to see that John had arrived on his bike to meet us after riding down from his home in Kirksville that morning. This came as no surprise, after we had the privilege of hearing his stories of adventure in retirement and cycling across the nation. In 2016, with nearly 20 years of service, John retired from the Missouri Department of Conservation at the age of 62. During his time with the state, he worked as a fishery resource technician, monitoring and managing marine ecosystems throughout Missouri. Before working for Conservation, he spent 10 years working for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, where he was based in Cordova, Alaska.



John said he enjoyed his time with Missouri Conservation and has missed the camaraderie of the work environment since leaving. John spoke fondly of his long career with Conservation, and even got to reminisce about stocking Long Branch Lake, the sight of this interview, with different species of fish for the department over the years.



John wasted no time leaping right into his retirement adventures. Since his retirement, John has biked more than 32,000 miles and shows no sign of stopping. In 2017, he participated in the annual Trans Am Bike Race. This race goes from coast to coast following the Adventure Bicycling Association's TransAmerica Bicycle Trail. It begins in Astoria, Oregon on the Pacific Ocean and ends in Yorktown, Virginia at the Atlantic Ocean. At more than 4,200 miles, this race is the longest self-supported bicycle race in the world.

John was required to carry a GPS tracker on his bike to monitor his speed and time and to ensure that the complete route was followed. John finished the race in an astonishing 28 days, 2 hours, and 54 minutes, averaging 151 miles a day!



After this major accomplishment, John felt the trail calling him back when he heard that no one had ever completed the race on a tandem bicycle. In 2019, history was made when, at the age of 65, John and a friend of his were the first competitors to complete the race on a tandem bike. They finished in 30 days, 6 hours, and 55 minutes, averaging 131.4 miles a day!

John's biking journey started long before his retirement days. He grew up in Putnam County, Missouri, and attended Northeast Missouri State University in Kirksville, now known as Truman State University. His first long-haul biking adventure began during his time

as a student there. In 1973, to escape the cold Midwest winters, John and his college pal decided they would bike from Kirksville to Oceanside, California. With aluminum frame backpacks, and a couple of half-gallon canteens, John on a Schwinn Varsity bike, and his friend on a Sears 10-speed, headed out west to warmer temperatures. Once they reached California and enjoyed the beach, they sold their bikes and hitchhiked home.

That adventure marked the first of many long-haul journeys. In the summer of 2011, John saved up his annual leave to participate in the Tour Divide. This race followed the continental divide from Banff, Canada to Antelope Wells, New Mexico, and was more than 2,700 miles. John expressed how beautiful the views were while on the ride saying, "I don't think you could have seen that type of scenery any other way." He completed the race in 21 days and averaged 126 miles per day.

The on-top-of-the-world rush that he may have felt from that race, unfortunately, wouldn't last long. John didn't know it at the time, but a few short months later, he would meet hard times on the road. In September of 2011, while biking home from work, he was hit by a one-ton cargo van. His injuries were extensive, and his recovery was long, but he is thankful to be alive today. Miraculously, John did not let the accident slow him down for long.

John always wanted to explore more of Alaska when he lived there but at that time the road north to the Arctic Circle was unavailable for private vehicles. In 2020, he decided it was finally time to do so, but COVID had other plans and he had to postpone.

However, last summer, he was finally able to pack his biking gear and head to Deadhorse/Prudhoe Bay, Alaska. From there, he started the long journey back to Missouri on his bike. John noted, "Since this wasn't a race, I took my time and enjoyed viewing all the amazing scenery and wildlife, and I also got to enjoy visiting with many interesting people." In total, John's ride was 4,163 miles and took him 51 days to complete.

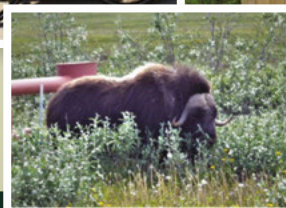
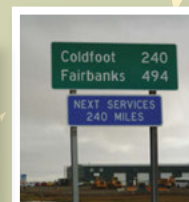
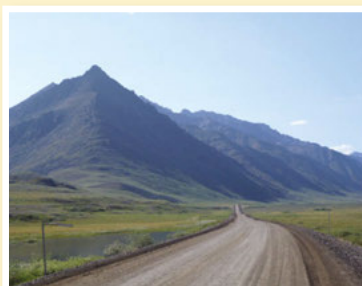


When asked what his favorite area has been to bike through, John's answer was simple, "Well that is impossible because I enjoy them all," he said. However, after thinking about it more, he decided it had to be his ride through Alaska and Canada last summer. "It wasn't an ultra-endurance race, so it allowed me to have the time to visit with many interesting people and explore sites as I desired."

Biking is not his only hobby. John is also an active runner and, since his retirement, he has run more than 6,000 miles. He will add another accomplishment to his list later this year when he turns 70 and runs the Bass Pro Fitness Series Conservation Marathon in Springfield, Missouri.

John is continuing his travels this summer as he bikes across the plains of Nebraska in the Bran 41. He will start in Benkelman, ride east, and end in Ashland, Nebraska. He then is heading to Columbus, to ride in the Tour de Nebraska for a 5-day biking adventure ending in Norfolk, Nebraska.

John's journey in retirement so far has been remarkable. We sincerely appreciate the many years of service that John dedicated to the state, and we hope his life continues to be full of adventures.



MOSERS Month Wrap-up

Our MOSERS Month campaign happens annually in April and is a month-long initiative dedicated to educating our members about their MOSERS benefits.

This year, we hosted the third annual campaign, and the theme was Pension Possible! Each week, we took members on adventurous missions with Special Agent Ben E. Fits to learn more about their MOSERS benefits.

This was our first year including retirees in one of the weeks and we hope to continue to expand MOSERS Month to include all members next year!

Some key takeaways from MOSERS Month 2023 were significant increases in the number of members who:

- Viewed their *Annual Benefit Statements* this year
- Submitted a *Designation of Agent* form
- Completed an *Authorization to Release Information* form

All three of these documents are important tools. Your *Annual Benefit Statement* provides a summary of all your benefits through MOSERS. The *Designation of Agent* form allows you to tell us who you want to manage your MOSERS benefits if you become incapacitated. The *Authorization to Release of Information* form gives us permission from you to talk with or send information about your benefits to another person or entity. They are all elements of planning for a smooth retirement.

Check out our MOSERS Month wrap-up!

THERE IS SO MUCH TO KNOW IN MOSERS THAT MORE INFORMATION, ESPECIALLY IN A FUN, INTERACTIVE METHOD, IS SO HELPFUL AND APPRECIATED.

MOSERS month has been exciting to learn about all the aspects of retirement and pension options.

What a fun little break from the heavy retirement discussions. Makes my retirement plans seem doable. Thanks.

THANKS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH THOSE OF US RETIRED FROM STATE GOVERNMENT.



BENEFIT STATEMENT VIEWS:

11,686

MARCH - APRIL 2023

7,291

MARCH - APRIL 2022

8,640

MARCH - APRIL 2021

Before today, did you know about the Designation of Agent form?

62%
No

WHAT ACTION WILL YOU TAKE?

66%

View your Annual Benefit Statement

54%

Fill out the Designation of Agent form

80%

Fill out the Authorization to Release Information form



Protect Yourself from Fraud

Protecting your pension and ensuring the security of your personal information are our top priorities. We understand the sensitivity and importance of your pension and financial data, and we take several measures to ensure its protection from fraudulent attacks.

Secure Online Access:

We provide **myMOSERS**, which is the secure online portal for you to access your benefit information. This portal ensures the authenticity of the user login and helps protect against unauthorized access to pension information.

Security Monitoring:

Our IT team is constantly evaluating our systems, networks, and security processes to ensure they meet the highest security standards.

Strong Passwords:

We encourage you to create strong, unique passwords for your **myMOSERS** and personal or work email logins. Use a combination of uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers, and special characters. Avoid using easily guessable information, such as birthdates or names, and consider using a reputable password manager to securely store and manage your passwords.

Phishing Scams:

Be cautious of suspicious emails, messages, or phone calls asking for personal or financial information. MOSERS will not request your sensitive information through email. Avoid clicking on links or downloading attachments from unknown sources, as they may contain malware designed to compromise your information. If you are not sure if a message from MOSERS is a phishing attempt, please feel free to contact our office and we can verify if it was sent by MOSERS or not. Better safe than sorry!

While we take significant measures to protect your personal information, you can also take steps to further safeguard yourself from fraud:

Regularly Monitor Accounts:

Keep a close eye on your bank accounts and regularly review your statements and transaction history of your monthly pension.

Report any suspicious or unauthorized activity immediately to MOSERS and your bank. Additionally, every time you log in to **myMOSERS** you will receive an email stating the login attempt. If you ever receive this email and are not actively trying to log in, please contact MOSERS as soon as possible.

Stay Informed:

Stay up to date with the latest security measures. Be aware of current scams targeting retirees, such as fake investment opportunities or offers that seem too good to be true. By working together, we can help protect the ongoing security of your pension information!

Retirees' Economic Impact

Are you curious about the impact of active and retired state employees on your local community?

According to the *Pensionomics* 2023 report from the National Institute on Retirement Security, each \$1 in state/local benefits paid to Missouri retirees, results in \$1.31 in total output, reflecting the ripple effects of retirees staying in Missouri and spending money.

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, MOSERS distributed more than \$992 million in total retirement and survivor benefit payments. Most of that money remains in Missouri going towards things like basic goods and services in our local communities.

Our Economic Impact Reports are located online in the About MOSERS section of our website. Click on Congressional, House, or Senate maps and find your district to view the number of active and retired members and the economic impact our members have in your area.

Nearly 90% of MOSERS payments go to retirees and survivors who remain in Missouri.

myMOSERS is Getting a Makeover!

We are getting closer to the launch of our new pension administration system, which means the look of myMOSERS will be changing!

The new system will be more intuitive and include more features for you to navigate and manage your benefits. Stay tuned for more details. Our team is hard at work and will be sharing more information over the next few months!

In the meantime, spend a little extra time with the current version of **myMOSERS** and take a look at all you can do!

What can I do in myMOSERS?

Submit a *Designation of Agent* form, review your *Annual Benefit Statement*, read correspondence from MOSERS, update your personal information, and more!

Do you still have life insurance through MOSERS? Do you want to check or change your beneficiaries? No problem! You can do both at **myMOSERS**. Log in to **myMOSERS** click on **Forms**, then on **Life Insurance Beneficiaries**, and follow the prompts.



Join the Missouri Ombudsman Program!

The Ombudsman program, which is a part of the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, is a long-term care organization with a network of individuals that spans across the state. Their team is dedicated to helping Missouri residents in long-term care facilities maintain and improve their quality of life by ensuring their rights are respected.

Recently, their staff reached out to us and asked that we help spread awareness among our members about the Ombudsman program.

As an ombudsman volunteer, you would work with residents residing in skilled nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, residential care facilities, and veterans' homes in your area. These facilities are full of vulnerable residents who often need someone to advocate, educate, and empower them. Missouri's Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program does just that.

The program is a network of ombudsman representatives serving residents to provide support and assistance with any complaints or problems that they may be facing in the facility in which they reside. An ombudsman representative seeks to reduce the sense of isolation some residents feel, especially those who do not have close family or friends. An ombudsman representative can help the resident rediscover a sense of self-determination and empower them to exercise their rights.

The best part about being a volunteer is it provides a sense of purpose and an opportunity to give back to someone in need, because ombudsmen truly make a difference.

How do I volunteer?

- 1 Complete the online ombudsman form at <http://health.mo.gov/seniors/ombudsman>
- 2 Call (800) 309-3282
- 3 Email: LTCOmbudsman@health.mo.gov





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RetireeNews Newsletter

Is Your Address Current?

Please review your mailing address to make sure your information is current, even if you receive your benefit payment and other correspondence from MOSERS electronically. If your address is out of date or invalid, you won't receive important information from MOSERS, such as some retirement and tax documents. You can log in to [myMOSERS](#) to update your information or give us a call.

Update Your Beneficiary Designations, too!

Visit [myMOSERS](#) to ensure your beneficiary designations are up to date with the person you currently want named, including their:

- Full name (may change if they get married or divorced)
- Address
- Social Security number
- Date of birth

Call Center Hours:

Monday - Friday
8:00 am - 12:00 pm
1:00 pm - 4:30 pm

Contact Us

(800) 827-1063 toll-free
(573) 632-6100 in Jefferson City

